

Declassified in Part - Sanitized Copy Approved for Release 2012/01/17 : CIA-RDP85T01058R000202110001-0

STAT

Declassified in Part - Sanitized Copy Approved for Release 2012/01/17 : CIA-RDP85T01058R000202110001-0

211

Central Intelligence Agency



Washington, D.C. 20505

DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE

18 November 1985

North Korea: Opposition to Peaceful Reunification

Summary

North Korean military and other officials oppose the North-South dialogue and do not believe reunification can be achieved by peaceful means. We suspect prowar opinion in fact exists, although we have no corroborating evidence. those holding such opinions are probably in a minority, although the recent stalemate in the North-South dialogue may have given them at least a temporary boost. In our judgment their grumblings are part of hardline discomfort over changing North Korean economic, political, and diplomatic priorities. Military leaders, in particular, might oppose policies threatening to transfer attention and perhaps resources from security to economic priorities.

This memorandum was prepared by Office of East Asian Analysis. Information available as of 18 November 1985 was used in its preparation. Comments and queries are welcome and may be directed to the Chief, Korea Branch, Northeast Asia Division, OEA,

EA M 85-10204

25X1

Opposition to Peaceful Reunification

[redacted] people
[redacted] reportedly are impatient with the North-South dialogue and would prefer--perhaps before the 1988 Olympics--to reunify the peninsula by military means. They consider intolerable South Korea's hosting of an event as prestigious as the Olympic Games. [redacted]

25X1

25X1

25X1

25X1

Hardline Impatience

We find plausible the notion of disagreement in North Korea over the advisability of a patient, diplomatic approach to reunification. It is likely that some North Korean leaders are alarmed at the worsening comparison between the North and South Korean economies and P'yongyang's increasing difficulty in competing with Seoul for friends abroad. North Korea's sole advantage is in the military balance, a fact that may encourage hardliners to argue for a military solution to the Korean question. It seems logical that hardliners--and in particular military leaders--would be skeptical of a policy that relies on a positive US and South Korean response to P'yongyang's overtures and does little in the short term to reverse such South Korean diplomatic advantages as the Olympic award. [redacted]

25X1

Some nuances indicative of policy differences can be gleaned from a close textual analysis of North Korean media. There appears to be a distinction between articles expressing hope for the results of dialogue and others stressing the need for vigilance and class struggle when discussing the same topic. [redacted]

25X1

25X1

But we have no firmer indications of factional discontent or its role in the policy process. Nor can we say for certain that those directly responsible for the 1983 Rangoon bombing are the same officials now reported to oppose peaceful reunification. In view of the limited information supporting the notion that the North Korean elite is split over dialogue policy, it is possible this report is North Korean disinformation designed to pressure Washington and Seoul for concessions by making it appear hardliners will otherwise advance in P'yongyang. [redacted]

25X1

25X1

Policy Context

If there are differences over reunification policy, we suspect they exist in the context of broader debates over North Korean economic and international policy. Since Rangoon--besides pressing the North-South dialogue and trying to increase contacts with Washington--P'yongyang has embarked on a significant effort to attract Japanese and Western capital and joint ventures. North Korea also has begun a few experiments with Chinese-style economic reform. At the same time, P'yongyang has obtained Soviet delivery of sophisticated military equipment and has tilted somewhat toward Moscow and away from Beijing. [redacted]

25X1

Such policy shifts would create cleavages in any country--given Korea's tradition of factional dispute there is no reason that North Korea should be any different. Kim's elimination of powerful challengers in the 1950s and 1960s showed that North Korea is susceptible to factional turmoil. Military leaders, in particular, might be especially inclined to oppose policies threatening to transfer attention and perhaps resources from security to economic priorities. [redacted]

25X1

North Korea, however, is different in one sense. We believe the existence in P'yongyang of a leader as dominating as Kim Il-song makes debate more difficult to discern than in other contemporary Communist states, where the top man serves more or less as first among equals. Policy disputes in the latter, while still masked by arcane language and political symbolism, are relatively intelligible because the public debate reflects a more-or-less collegial policymaking process. [redacted]

25X1

In North Korea, on the other hand, Kim Il-song has held a position closer to that of Stalin and Enver Hoxha than any living Communist (other than perhaps Ceaucescu). Kim--and Kim Chong-il as well--may stand above the fray of political dispute, making independent and perhaps unpredictable decisions. In such circumstances contesting underlings may have a hard time assessing their strength, and, because a wrong guess could be unhealthy, may be cautious about advertising their lines through public discussion. If correct, and this is entirely speculation, this hypothesis suggests that evidence of policy disputes might become clearer when Kim Il-song passes from the scene--assuming the son is not able to impose the father's aura of unassailability. [redacted]

25X1

Hardline Strength

The difficulty of reading North Korean political debates makes problematic any assessment of the strength of alleged dissenters. [redacted]

25X1

[redacted] we believe recent

25X1

25X1

developments could have triggered at least a temporary resurgence. [REDACTED]

25X1
25X1

[REDACTED] Red
Cross exchanges had just taken place, and Washington had granted visas for first-ever visits by North Korean academics. We believe both Koreas viewed the visa case as evidence that P'yongyang's "smile diplomacy" was having an effect on US policy. [REDACTED]

25X1

The dialogue, however, has since reached a plateau. North Korea has withheld substantive concessions, and South Korea has slowed the tempo of the talks. In particular, South Korea has refused to schedule the next round of interparliamentary talks--clearly North Korea's preferred forum. The North's media in the past few weeks--perhaps reflecting the views of hardliners or a nod to them by Kim Il-song--have indicated increasing impatience with Seoul's alleged obstructionism, warning that continued lack of progress could threaten the dialogue itself. Chinese officials, in discussions with US diplomats, have warned that P'yongyang may suspend the dialogue unless the United States and South Korea reduce the scope of the 1986 Team Spirit joint exercise. We believe P'yongyang is indeed likely to put discussions on hold if the United States and South Korea announce their intention to make Team Spirit as large or larger than last year's version. [REDACTED]

25X1

Terror Versus War

[REDACTED] We
note here only our judgment that new North Korean terrorism would not necessarily signal the ascendancy of prowar forces. We doubt those advocating reunification through force would be satisfied even if North Korea reacted to a diplomatic stalemate with actions resembling Rangoon or the effort to assassinate Park Chung Hee in the Blue House in 1968. [REDACTED]

25X1

25X1

Terror may be part of a strategy of alternating efforts to destabilize South Korea with attempts to use peaceful means to decouple it from its major ally. [REDACTED]

25X1
25X1

[REDACTED] they may feel that neither gradual efforts to undermine South Korea's international position nor piecemeal attempts to chip away at its stability through terror can stem the eroding--from North Korea's view--economic and perhaps eventually military balance on the peninsula. The hardliners may argue that the declining "correlation of forces" means the North must risk one roll of the dice now rather than lose its chance to reunify the peninsula. [REDACTED]

25X1
25X1

25X1

25X1

SUBJECT: North Korea: Opposition to Peaceful Reunification [REDACTED]

Distribution:

25X1

Original - Author

- 1 - Donald Gregg, Assistant to the Vice President
- 1 - William Sherman, State/EAP
- 1 - James Kelly, DOD/ISA
- 1 - Richard Childress, NSC
- 1 - Harriet Isom, State/EAP/Korea
- 1 - Celia Conlon, Department of State
- 1 - NIO/EA (7E-62)
- 1 - C/PPS/DO (D01)
- 1 - C/EA [REDACTED] (5E18)
- 1 - OEA/NEA/Korea Branch
- 1 - OEA/NEA/Japan Branch
- 1 - OEA/NEA/STI Branch
- 1 - OEA/NEA Division
- 1 - OEA/China Division
- 1 - OEA/SEA Division
- 1 - D/OEA (4F18)
- 1 - C/Research/OEA
- 1 - FBIS Analysis Group
- 1 - DDI
- 1 - Senior Review Panel
- 1 - PDB Staff (7F30)
- 5 - CPAS/IMC/CG (7G07)
- 1 - CPAS/ILS (7G50)
- 1 - C/PES (7F24)
- 1 - NIC/AG (7E47)
- 1 - DDO/EA Division (5D00)
- 1 - DDO/EA [REDACTED] (5C19)
- 1 - DDO/EA [REDACTED] (5C19)

25X1

25X1

25X1

OEA/NA/KOREA, [REDACTED] (18 November 1985)

25X1

25X1